

"Retrospection"



One brought to me in the twilight dim
A coal black steed that was foam and fire—
"Up and away you must ride," cried he,
"You must ride this night—and you must not tire ;
For you ride this night by the will of God,
Who has lain on you the chastening rod,
And ride you quickly—ride you well—
That you ride through the depth of Nethermost hell
And forth again ere the dawning.

Many have ridden this way before,
On man this burden has ever lain ;
But feet have stumbled and hearts have quailed,
Few—once in the deep—return again.
But that you see and that you hear
To the world of the living back you bear,
If you ride quickly and ride well,
Ride through the depth of Nethermost hell
And forth again ere the dawning.

If you quail not at the sight of pain,
Nor tarry, nor falter by the way,
You will ride through the region of endless night
And yet return to the world of day ;
You will ride through the region of endless woe—
And the grief of the damned shall surely know—
But ride you quickly and ride you well
As you ride through the depth of Nethermost hell
Or you come not forth ere the dawning."